



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

DIRK KEMPTHORNE – Governor
KARL B. KURTZ – Director

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
450 West State Street, 10th Floor
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0036
PHONE 208-334-5625
FAX 208-334-0668

FACT SHEET

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Tom Shanahan
(208) 334-0668

The Facts About Foster Parents

- NUMBERS**
- The number of licensed foster family homes in Idaho fluctuates between 800 and 1,000 based on a number of variables.
 - Nationwide, the number of licensed, certified, and approved foster-family (non-relative) homes continues to decline, shrinking 3 percent since 1986 from 146,000 to 142,000 in 2000.
 - Idaho has a shortage of foster families that can take sibling groups, as well as a deficit of Native American and Hispanic foster homes.

- MOTIVES** Some of the reasons cited by people who choose to become foster parents are:
- Helping children;
 - Giving back to the community;
 - Possibility of becoming an adoptive parent; and
 - Love for children.

- AGE** Age requirements may vary from state to state but in Idaho applicants need to be at least 21 years of age.

- FAMILY STRUCTURE**
- Most U.S. foster families have a female caregiver present and consist of a married, two-parent household.
 - An estimated 25 percent to 50 percent of foster parents nationwide are single.

- INCOME**
- Nearly two-thirds of foster parents – 59 percent – work outside of the home, and only one-third of foster mothers are full-time homemakers.
 - Idaho's basic monthly maintenance rates paid to foster families – which does not include clothing, educational fees, Christmas and birthday funds, and daycare reimbursement – are \$261 for children ages 0-5, \$286 for children ages 6-12, and \$410 for children ages 13-18.
 - The average U.S. monthly basic maintenance payment from 1998-2001 was \$382 for 2-year-old foster children, \$401 for 9-year-olds, and \$461 for 16-year-olds.
 - The average U.S. monthly expenditure on children for husband-and-wife families in 2000 was \$728 for 2-year-old children, \$746 for 9-year-olds, and \$822 for 16-year-olds.

- EDUCATION** U.S. foster parents are usually high school graduates with some college education.

(more)

PROCESS The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare requires that every family providing foster care to children in the Department's custody have a valid Child Care License. This ensures that the foster family and their home meet the required standards for the care and safety of children. Foster families undergo an extensive evaluation of their suitability, the safety of their home environment, and the skills to meet the needs of abused and neglected children.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For more information, please contact Mickey Harmer at (208) 334-5695.